

Message Text

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R 272252Z DEC 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COGARD POLAD

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: DECEMBER 27 EA PRESS SUMMARY

(CSM, CHITRIB AND JOC UNAVAILABLE)

INDOCHINA

1. MILITARY SOURCES REPORT BOTH AN A-37 SKYRAIDER
AND UH-1 HELICOPTER WERE DOWNED BY AA FIRE IN QUANG
DUC PROVINCE, ONLY ONE CREWMAN WOUNDED (UPI NYDN).
COMMUNISTS SHOT DOWN ANOTHER GVN HELICOPTER (KILLING
9 AND WOUNDING 36 SOLDIERS ABOARD) WHILE LANDING
AT TONG LE CHAN BASE. TWO OTHER AIRCRAFT CRASHED
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SINCE DEC. 21ST DUE TO MECHANICAL FAILURES, KILLING

32 AND WOUNDING 17 (NYT, SUN, AP).

2. 150 ARVN TROOPS ARE REPORTED KILLED IN BATTLE ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE, ACCORDING TO MILITARY SOURCES (WP). NVA ALSO ATTACKED SIX MILITIA POSITIONS IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE AFTER CUTTING HIGHWAY ONE 318 MILES NORTH OF SAIGON. ARVN SPOKESMAN REPORTS ALL ATTACKS REPULSED (AP, UPI, NYDN, NYT).

3. SOVIET VP NIYAZBEKOV ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO NVN SAID SOVIET PEOPLE REGARD "STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT IS INDESPENSABLE CONDITION FOR

...PEACE" AND CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE END TO SVN VIOLATIONS OF PARIS AGREEMENT (REUTER, WP).

4. UPI REPORTS THAT GVN NEGOTIATORS AGREED TO MEET VC AGAIN FRIDAY DESPITE RECENT WALKOUTS BY COMMUNISTS (NA, NYDN).

5. CUBA ANNOUNCES THAT 400 CUBAN WORKERS WILL LEAVE JAN. 5 FOR NVN TO WORK ON FARMS AND ROAD BUILDING AS PART OF PROGRAM TO HELP RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS (PHINQ).

6. IN LONG-EXPECTED MOVE, LON NOL PICKS LONG BORET AS PM. BORET, 40, CONSIDERED ONE OF ABLEST KHMER POLITICIANS, RETURNED TO PP SATURDAY FROM UN WHERE HE SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED THE GKR SEAT. BORET HEADS LIST OF 16 CABINET APPOINTEES, ALL BUT THREE INCUMBENTS (UPI NYT, NYDN; WP).

7. KYODO OFFICIAL SAYS CORRESPONDENT KOKI ISHIYAMA LEFT PP OCT. 10 TO TRAVEL IN WESTERN PROVINCES BUT FAILED TO RETURN AS PLANNED ON NOV. 1; BELIEVED TO BE PRISONER OF COMMUNISTS (WP).

8. FOUR VENDORS KILLED AND 45 SHOPPERS WOUNDED WHEN DISGRUNTLED SOLDIER THREW GRENADE INTO CROWDED MARKETPLACE SE OF PP WEDNESDAY (UPI, NYDN; WP).
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9. FIELD REPORTS SAY INSURGENTS OVERRUN THREE GKR MILITIA OUTPOSTS AS FIGHTING FLARES WITHIN FIVE MILES NORTH OF PP. FANK CONDUCTS CLEARING OPERATIONS EAST OF MEKONG AT POINTS FIVE AND 14 MILES NE OF PP, CAPTURES TWO PAGODAS SOUTH OF PP, REOPENS ROUTE 1 TO NEAK LUONG. OTHER CLASHES 41 MILES WEST OF PP ON ROUTE 4 (AP NYT, SUN; WP).

10. CLARITY (NYT) REPORTS FROM AID-FINANCED NAM TAN IRRIGATION DAM PROJECT ON MEKONG TRIBUTARY IN LAOS. ARABLE LAND IN VALLEY DOUBLED, SURPLUS RICE HARVESTED THIS YEAR, BUT THE 16,000 LOCAL INHABITANTS ARE STILL LEARNING TO COPE WITH THE SYSTEM'S 43 MILES OF CANALS AND DITCHES. LAST AMERICAN WILL DEPART IN ABOUT A YEAR AND LEAVE BEHIND COMMUNITY THAT FEEDS SELF, HAS FARM MACHINERY AND A SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, BUT ALSO PROBLEMS. DIFFICULTIES INCLUDE BOREDOM OF AG MINISTRY ON-SITE OFFICIALS, AND ETHNIC FACTIONALISM CAUSED BY INFLUX OF HARDER-WORKING MEO REFUGEES INTO TRADITIONAL LAO AREA. LAO OFFICIALS IMPRESSED BY DECISIVENESS OF AID

DIRECTOR MANN AND JIMMY GREEN, LAST AMERICAN WORKING AT DAM SITE, IN RELATION TO PROJECT.

CHINA

11. BACK IN ROME, KINGSBURY SMITH (NA DEC. 26) SEES CHINA BEGINNING TO EMERGE AS POTENTIALLY GREAT OIL POWER WHICH MAY, WITHIN NEXT DECADE OR TWO, FREE JAPAN AND OTHER ASIAN NATIONS FROM DEPENDENCE ON ME OIL. HE WAS INFORMED IN PEKING THAT PRODUCTION REACHED 30 MILLION TONS LAST YEAR AND EXPECTED TO BE 45 MILLION NEXT YEAR, MOSTLY FROM TACHING, BUT VAST RESERVES AWAIT TAPPING. US OIL COMPANIES AND EQUIPMENT MFGRS. REPS HAVE BEEN IN PEKING TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S OIL RESOURCES. PRC ALREADY EXPORTING OIL TO HK AND ALLOWING SOME TO BE REEXPORTED TO TAIWAN. IF PRC COULD SUPPLY JAPAN'S NEEDS, LATTER COULD GET OUT FROM UNDER CONTINUING ARAB BLACKMAIL WHICH IS APPLIED DESPITE GOJ'S APPEASEMENT; AND UNCLASSIFIED

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SUCH DEVELOPMENT MIGHT LEAD JAPAN "TO ALIGN ITSELF" WITH PRC. SIMILARLY, PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF ARAB BLACKMAIL WITH ULTIMATUM TO STOP SUPPLYING US FORCES. IF PRC CAN IN COMING YEARS ASSURE PHILS POL NEEDS, THEY ARE LIKELY MOVE MUCH CLOSER TO CHINA.

12. MAO'S 80TH BIRTHDAY PASSES WITHOUT MENTION BY HSINHUA OR PUBLIC CELEBRATION, REPORTEDLY AT HIS WISH (AP NYDN).

13. AP MOSCOW REPORTS PRC-USSR BORDER TALKS HAVE COME TO HALT, WITH SPECIALISTS IN SINO-SOVIET AFFAIRS REPORTEDLY VIEWING RELATIONS AS WORST SINCE OPEN FRONTIER FIGHTING IN 1969. AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET

JOURNAL ("PROBLEMS OF THE FAR EAST") MAKES "UNUSUAL REVELATION" THAT MEETINGS HAVE PROVED FUTILE BECAUSE PEKING DEMANDS AS PREREQUISITE THAT BORDER BE MOVED DEEP INSIDE SOVIET AND THAT SOVIET FORCES WITHDRAW FROM NUMBER OF USSR REGIONS (WP). AT SAME TIME, RANKING SOVIET POLITBURO MEMBER RAISED LEVEL OF ANTAGONISM TO NEW HEIGHT BY DESCRIBING PRC AS "AGGRESSIVE POWER." PRESUMABLY CONNECTED WITH THIS APPREHENSIVE VIEW, CONFERENCE OF CIVIL DEFENSE STAFF BEGAN IN MOSCOW TUESDAY AND SOME WESTERN DIPLOMATS WERE STRUCK BY SENIOR RANK OF PARTICIPANTS AND TOOK THIS AS SIGN THAT CONFERENCE WAS NOT ROUTINE (SUN).

14. TOKYO REFINERY SOURCES SAY CHINA NEARLY TRIPLED PRICE OF CRUDE OIL EXPORTS AS OF JAN., LEAVING PRC OIL COMPETITIVE WITH PERSIAN GULF OIL (WP).

15. AFP REPORTS THAT MORE THAN 300 - MOSTLY FOREIGNERS - ATTENDED CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS AT ONLY CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PEKING CONDUCTED BY CHINESE PRIEST. ABOUT 30 CHINESE, MOST ELDERLY, WERE PRESENT. CHURCH CLOSED IN 1966 DURING GPCR, REOPENED LAST YEAR. EARLIER, SOME 30 PERSONS OF VARIED NATIONALITIES LED BY UK DIPLOMAT VISITED VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE TWO DIPLOMATIC DISTRICTS TO SING CAROLS, STARTING AT USLO AND ENDING AT UK EMBASSY. FOREIGN COMMUNITY UNCLASSIFIED

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USED PLASTIC TREES OR POTTED CYPRESSES, SOLD FOR THE OCCASION AT FRIENDSHIP STORE. ALSO ON SALE ARE COLORED FAIRY LIGHTS AND - APPARENTLY THROUGH SOME SEASONAL CONFUSION - CHOCOLATE EGGS AND RABBITS.

16. UPI REPORTS (LAT DEC. 24) ARRIVAL OF FIVE THOUSAND CASES OF TSINGTAO BEER IN OAKLAND AND LA. QUOTES WESTERN REGIONAL SALES MANAGER SAYING, "CALIFORNIA IS THE TASTING GROUND. IF PEOPLE GO FOR IT HERE, WE WILL EXPAND ACROSS THE COUNTRY;" ADDS THAT OFFICES HAD BEEN SET UP IN LA AND SF TO PROMOTE THIS NATURALLY CARBONATED BREW, WHICH CONTAINS NO PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES. (CHANCELLOR, ON NBC NEWS DEC. 24, NOTED THAT CORRESPONDENTS ON PRESIDENT'S CHINA TRIP WHO TASTED THE BEER "DIDN'T WRITE HOME ABOUT IT").

JAPAN

17. MITI TEMPORARILY POSTPONES NEWLY-ANNOUNCED CUTBACKS IN INDUSTRIAL USE OF FUELS IN VIEW OF ARAB DECISION TO EASE OIL RESTRICTIONS ON JAPAN (WSJ; NYT'S BUTTERFIELD AND WP'S OBERDORFER IN TOKYO).

BUTTERFIELD SAYS FEW GOJ OFFICIALS -"PARTICULARLY THOSE CHARGED WITH SUPERVISING JAPAN'S OIL SUPPLIES" -- SEEM TO HAVE CLEAR IDEA OF EXACTLY HOW MUCH OIL JAPAN HAS, HOW MUCH SHE IS SHORT, OR HOW MUCH NEW ARAB MOVES WILL ACTUALLY BENEFIT JAPAN. ADDS THAT IN GOJ'S VIEW, PART OF CREDIT FOR CHANGED ARAB POLICY GOES TO MIKI'S 3-WEEK ME TOUR AND NOTES WEDNESDAY ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MIKI WILL VISIT US EARLY NEXT YEAR TO OUTLINE GOJ'S NEW ME POLICY. OBERDORFER SAYS US IS REPORTED RELUCTANT TO AGREE ON MIKI VISIT, HOWEVER, AND US SOURCES IN TOKYO INDICATE WASHINGTON WOULD PREFER DIFFERENT ENVOY. SAYS IN VIEW OF ARAB PRESSURES ON JAPAN AND OTHER ALLIES AGAINST US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, AND OF JAPAN'S "SHARP DIVERGENCE" UNDER THAT PRESSURE, MIKI TRIP AND OTHER ALLIANCE MATTERS "COULD BECOME STICKY PROBLEMS" IN WEEKS AHEAD.

18. SECURITIES PRICES SOARED ON TOKYO EXCHANGE WEDNESDAY FOLLOWING EASING OF ARAB OIL RESTRICTIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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(WSJ; OBERFORFER; BUTTERFIELD; NYDN); BUT PRESSURE ON YEN EASED ONLY MODERATELY SUGGESTING, SAYS WSJ, LINGERING WORRIES THAT SHARP PRICE INCREASE WILL HAVE SEVERE IMPACT ON JAPAN'S INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS.

19. DURING TEHERAN STOPOVER, MIKI WAS REPORTEDLY "SERIOUSLY WARNED" THAT CONTINUED IRAN-JAPAN COOPERATION DEPENDS DIRECTLY ON EFFECTIVE MEASURES BY GOJ TO PROVIDE IRAN WITH RAW MATERIALS NECESSARY FOR INDUSTRY (REUTER, NYT). AS CONSEQUENCE, AFP REPORTS NAKASONE IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT IRAN TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENT FOR CREDITS, STEEL AND CHEMICALS EARLY NEXT YEAR (WP).

20. TOYO POL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY SAYS IT WILL SOON SEND TEAM TO HANOI TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT ON OIL EXPLORATION IN TONKIN GULF. FIRM DENIES REPORTS IT HAS ALREADY RECEIVED EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS IN AREA (WP). MAINICHI REPORTS JAPAN WILL IMPORT EGYPTIAN OIL FOR FIRST TIME BEGINNING NEXT YEAR UNDER CONTRACT REPORTEDLY CALLING FOR 300,000 TONS IN FY 1974, 500,000 IN FY 1975 AND ONE MILLION TONS PER YEAR THEREAFTER (WP).

21. GOJ AND ROKG HELD ANNUAL AID MEETING WEDNESDAY THAT HAD BEEN POSTPONED 3 MONTHS BECAUSE OF KIM DAE JUNG CASE. OBERDORFER (WP) REPORTS RESULT WAS "WATERED-DOWN COMMUNIQUE, SHARPLY REDUCED JAPANESE

AID TO SEOUL AND AN AGREEMENT TO TERMINATE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AFTER COMPLETION OF KOREA'S CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN IN 1976." ADDS THAT COMMUNIQUE, UNLIKE THOSE OF PAST, MADE NO MENTION OF NEW AID LEVEL, AND SAYS "THERE WAS NO DOUBT" THAT WEDNESDAY'S AGREEMENT WAS AFFECTED BY KIM CASE. RECOUNTING GOJ-ROKG "ELABORATE COMPROMISE" AND "PAPER-OVER" OF KIM CASE THAT LED TO RESUMPTION OF "SUPPOSEDLY 'NORMALIZED' BUSINESS AND POLITICAL TIES," SUN'S PEPPER OBSERVES THAT "ACTUALLY, NEITHER SIDE HAS ANY GREAT AFFECTION FOR THE OTHER, BUT EACH FIGURES IT NEEDS THE OTHER ENOUGH TO PRECLUDE A RUPTURE UNCLASSIFIED

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OF RELATIONS."

22. OBERDORFER REPORTS THAT ROK FAILURE TO ALLOW KIM DAE JUNG DEPART FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN TOKYO WEDNESDAY BY STUDENTS, TRADE UNIONISTS AND SOME KOREAN RESIDENTS. MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES ALSO ATTACKED GOJ FOR HOLDING FOREIGN AID CONFERENCE WITHOUT FULLY RESOLVING ISSUES LEFT OVER FROM KIM KIDNAPPING. KOREA

23. PREMIER KIM IN NATIONWIDE RADIO-TV SPEECH SAYS ROKG WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY DEFIANCE OF COUNTRY'S CURRENT RULING SYSTEM; INSISTS STATE'S BASIC SETUP IS DESIGNED FOR PROTECTION FROM COMMUNIST THREATS, AND APPEALS FOR PEOPLE TO REFRAIN FROM ACTS BEYOND LIMIT OF "PERMISSIVE FREEDOM" (AP, WP; UPI, NYDN; NYT).

THAILAND

24. AP SEOUL DISPATCH REPORTS GEN. NARONG SAYING HE PLANS RETURN TO BANGKOK (NYDN).

25. RTG ORDERS LIMITS ON HOURS OF THEATERS AND MESSAGE PARLORS AND RESTRICTIONS ON STREET LIGHTING, ELECTRIC SIGNS AND AIR CONDITIONING IN GOVT. OFFICES BECAUSE OF OIL CRISIS (WP).

PHILIPPINES

26. SIXTY-SIX PERSONS ARRESTED MORE THAN YEAR AGO UNDER MARTIAL LAW HAVE BEEN RELEASED IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS, ACCORDING MANILA MILITARY ANNOUNCEMENT. RELEASEES IDENTIFIED AS FORMER STUDENT ACTIVISTS AND SUSPECTED DISSIDENTS IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN

LUZON. CURFEW LIFTED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE (LAT DEC. 25).

27. FORTY-SIX US OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN ARE CURRENTLY WINDING UP FOURTH AND LARGEST US CIVIC UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION TRAINING EXERCISE IN PHILS SINCE MARTIAL LAW. WORKING CLOSELY WITH GOP ARMED FORCES IN PROGRAM DESIGNED TO HELP RURAL POOR AND, AT SAME TIME, POLISH IMAGES OF BOTH GOVTS., AMERICANS ARE BUILDING COUNTRY SCHOOLS, HANDING OUT BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES, MAKING WELL WATER SAFE TO DRINK, PUTTING UP SUSPENSION BRIDGES AND GIVING DOGS ANTIRABIES

SHOTS. US CONGRESS HAS WARNED AGAINST PROVIDING PHILS AID IN WAY THAT WOULD GIVE IMPRESSION AMERICANS ARE HELPING IMPOSE AUTHORITARIAN RULE; AND EA ASSISTANT SEC.-DESIGNATE INGERSOLL TOLD SFRC NOV. 29 THAT US WOULD NOT INTERVENE MILITARILY TO SUPPORT MARCOS GOVT. GREEN BERETS INSIST THEIR EFFORTS DESIGNED TO HELP FILIPINOS, NOT GOP (AP, ST. LOUIS P-D, DEC. 23).

28. PHILS JESUIT GROUP HAS ACCEPTED 82,000-DOL US GRANT TO PROMOTE BIRTH CONTROL IS ASIA. PROGRAM WILL USE FILMS, TV, RADIO AND PAMPHLETS IN TRYING TO AFFECT ATTITUDES AMONG CHURCH LEADERS IN PHILS, HK, INDONESIA, JAPAN, SK, TAIWAN, THAILAND, AND SVN (AP, NYT).

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

29. FROM HONG KONG, S-N'S BRADSHER (DEC. 26) WRITES LENGTHY ARTICLE MARKING MAO'S 80TH BIRTHDAY. SEES MAO ENGAGED IN WHAT SEEMS AN UNENDING POLITICAL STRUGGLE, STILL PURSUING HIS LIFE-LONG GOAL OF MAKING CHINA PROSPEROUS AND POWERFUL ACCORDING TO HIS OWN HIGHLY PERSONAL, NATIONALIST BLEND OF ECLECTIC PHILOSOPHY AND EARTHY PRACTICALITY. NOTES A CYCLICAL QUALITY IN MAO'S BATTLE IN RECENT DECADES: PERIODS OF ASSERTION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS TO TRY TO INSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS METHODS, FOLLOWED BY WITHDRAWAL INTO A MORE ALOOF ROLE, DISAPPOINTMENT AND REASSERTION. GPCR CONSIDERED ONE OF THOSE ASSERTIVE SURGES, THE MOST SPECTACULAR ATTACK BY MAO ON WHAT HE FELT HAD GONE WRONG. BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE FAILED TO INSURE CHINA AGAINST RELAPSE INTO WHAT MAOISTS LABEL "REVISIONISM" BUT WHAT UNCLASSIFIED

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OUTSIDERS MIGHT CALL HUMAN FRAILTY. THE RESULT ON MAO'S BIRTHDAY IS YET ANOTHER MAO-INSPIRED ATTACK ON THE PRC'S LEADERSHIP. THE MAIN TARGET IS CHOU, WHO THUS FINALLY JOINS THE LONG LINE OF ONE-TIME CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF MAO WHOM HE HAS TURNED AGAINST. BRADSHER NOTES THAT EVERY TIME MAO HAS FELT THAT POLITICAL CONVICTION WAS BEING SACRIFICED TO BUROCRATIC CONTROLS, OR HAS OTHERWISE BECOME UNHAPPY WITH PRACTICAL POLICY, HE HAS LAUNCHED A PURGE; BUT EVERY PURGE HAS IN SOME WAYS BEEN A BIT WEAKER THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE. THE REGRESSIVE FACTOR MIGHT BE AT WORK NOW, SINCE MAO ENTERED THIS NEW STRUGGLE WITH LESS PREPARATION AND FEWER OBVIOUS RESOURCES THAN PREVIOUS ONES. FOR EXAMPLE, OBSERVES THAT THE ARMY HAS NOT BEEN DEVELOPED AS A POLITICAL

ELEMENT THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE THE GPCR. REBUILDING OF "MASS ORGANIZATIONS" IS ONE APPARENT EFFORT BY MAO AND HIS RADICAL FOLLOWERS TO DEVELOP TOOLS FOR THE STRUGGLE.

30. LAT'S MCARTHUR (DEC. 25), WRITING FROM BEN TRE, SEES GREENING OF SCARS OF WAR IN KIEN HOA PROVINCE. OBSERVES THAT WHILE MOST OF PROVINCE IS AT PEACE, TERM IS STRICTLY RELATIVE SINCE REPORTS INDICATE THAT SINCE JAN. C-F SOME 300 MEN OF PROVINCIAL FORCES WERE KILLED ALONG WITH 80 CIVILIANS. PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS CLAIM VC LOST 2,000 DEAD. PROVINCE CHIEF COL. PHAM CHI KIM SAYS KIEN HOA HAS FROM 7 TO 20 INCIDENTS IN NORMAL DAY. MEANWHILE, PROVINCE MILITIA AND HUNDREDS OF REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT CADRES RUN 23 SAIGON-INSPIRED "PROGRAMS", SOME OF WHICH OFFICIALS ADMIT ARE LAGGING BADLY. RICE DELIVERIES TO THE GOVERNMENT ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE; PROGRAM TO ATTRACT VC DEFECTORS IS FAILING AND MANY ARE DOUBTLESS SIMPLY HIDING IN THE OFFICIAL WOODWORK. RED TAPE AND CORRUPTION EXIST THOUGH SUCH BURDENS IN KIEN HOA APPEAR FAR LIGHTER THAN IN MANY OTHER PROVINCES. ON OTHER HAND, THERE ARE VISIBLE SIGNS ALMOST EVERYWHERE OF BETTER TIMES. RURAL BANKS ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE

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SUBSTANTIAL LOANS - FREEING FARMERS TO SOME EXTENT FROM OLD DEPENDENCE ON CHINESE MONEY LENDERS AND RICE TRADERS; TAX COLLECTIONS ARE RUNNING AHEAD

OF PROJECTIONS IN MANY VILLAGES. RECALLING THAT VC ROOTS RUN DEEP IN THE PROVINCE, MCARTHUR NOTES THAT VC INFILTRATION WAS MOST EMBARRASSINGLY EVIDENT WHEN VC MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT MILITIA WOULD OPEN THE GATES OF FORTS AND PERMIT THEM TO BE OVERRUN WITH LITTLE OR NO FIGHTING. LAST YEAR THAT SCENE WAS REPEATED ABOUT 24 TIMES; SINCE C-F, ONLY 5 SUCH INCIDENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. NOTES THAT MO CAY DISTRICT, BIRTHPLACE OF PRG'S MME. BINH, REMAINS VIRTUALLY ENEMY TERRITORY, AND THERE ARE IN THE PROVINCE 3,500 GUERRILLAS AND VC LED BY NAM XUONG, VC VETERAN WHOSE NAME CAN BE TRANSLATED AS "FIVE BONES." SOVIETS SAY HE IS THIRD VC COMMISSAR OF KIEN HOA THIS YEAR; THEY TAKE THAT AS SIGN HIS PREDECESSORS MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED AND THAT VC STRENGTH IS DWINDLING.

"YET THE WAR HAS SO FAR SHOWN NO SHORTAGE OF MEN LIKE FIVE BONES, CERTAINLY NOT IN KIEN HOA," MCARTHUR COMMENTS.

31. NYT'S HALLORAN EXAMINES UNIQUE ROLE OF JAPAN'S 24 DEPUTY CABINET MINISTERS. ALTHOUGH CAREER PROFESSIONALS

NEITHER ELECTED NOR POLITICALLY APPOINTED, THEY ARE PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL GROUP IN JAPAN. NOTES THAT THROUGHOUT JAPANESE HISTORY THOSE WHO APPEARED TO HOLD POWER OFTEN HAD LITTLE WHILE THOSE WHO HAD IT WERE USUALLY UNSEEN. DEPUTY MINISTERS OPERATE BEHIND VEIL, MEETING TOGETHER TO MAKE INTER-MINISTERIAL DECISIONS BY CONSENSUS WHICH BECOMES "UNIFIED VIEW" WHEN PRESENTED TO CABINET. CABINET INVARIABLY APPROVES THESE DECISIONS, AND ANYTHING NOT DECIDED AT DEPUTIES' MEETINGS IS NEVER SEEN BY CABINET. WITHIN THE 24 DEPUTIES, THREE ARE FIRST AMONG EQUALS; THOSE REPRESENTING FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MITI. KISSINGER

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